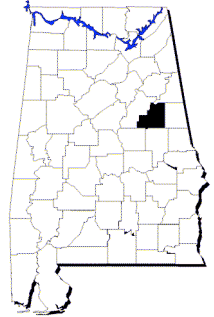


CLAY COUNTY

Honorable George C. Simpson

Clay County Courthouse
P.O. Box 880
Ashland, AL 36251
(256) 354-7633



Lynn Benefield
Keith Jones
Arthue Oliver
Nancy Benefield
Audrey Hamlin
Tina Nolen
April Ice
Mike Johnson
Angela Harris
Diane Cooper
Thomas Hynes
Matt Benefield
Anna Marie Rush
Marty Hodge
Donna Frye
Jennifer Alam
Jerry Herston
Carolyn Smith

Mary Riddle
Martha Griffin
Jon Wheelles
April Williams
Edward Latham
Richard Whatley
Peggy Mezick
Kelly Mumper
Greg Varner
Sally Runyan
Bobby Vinson
Nell West
Tod Harfield
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Joanne Blair
Earnestine Caldwell
Susan Ryals
Zeola Echlos

Anthony Wilkinson
David Proctor
Donna McKay
Jerry Colquett
Karen McKinney
Benny Davis
Guy Lipscomb
Jill Rush
Roger Gaiter
Annie Letham
Kathy Pinkston
Tammy Counts
Monty Giddens
Kenny Packer
Amanda Upchurch

Council Priorities

1. Safety

Funding of local Family Resource Centers and Executive Director Positions will greatly facilitate a non-branded location for families to go for help in dealing with family issues. From this will follow drug awareness, parenting and numerous other educational opportunities which will benefit families and children, promoting safety and preventing delinquency.

2. Parent Involvement and Skills

Funding is needed for the startup of programs for development of parenting skills and for publication of the availability of the same. Small rural communities lack the resources for funding such programs; however, once originally funded, some can and often do become self supporting, through cooperation between the program, DHR, and the courts, etc. These startups should coincide with the appropriate media publicity.

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Do all parents-to-be of children from birth to 12 years of age have access to prenatal and parent educational classes, with accommodations for bilingual families

Action Steps

- 1) Provide ongoing parenting classes (with child-care) with referrals from schools, court system, mental health, and other professions.
- 2) Provide all children from birth to 12 years of age access to family and childhood developmental classes, to coincide with the parenting classes being taught for targeted adults.
- 3) Provide access to and develop a referral source for local prenatal and newborn parent education classes.
- 4) Establish a family resource center where the foregoing classes and counseling, etc. will be provided.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Is there sufficient job opportunities and workforce availability for a local rural population to become economically secure, such as security being essential to the health and safety of families and children

Action Steps

- 1) Provide career awareness/education and goal setting activities to promote values and attitudes regarding future education and vocation.
- 2) Establish some form of "trade training."
- 3) Establish and support programs that promote educational and cultural awareness.
- 4) Establish a Family Resource Center where the foregoing programs can be carried out.
- 5) Employ an Executive Director of a Family Resource Center who can devote full time effort toward locating funds for such programs and seeing to their long-term viability.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Does every child in Clay County, Alabama have access to a quality education that incorporates both academics and cultural awareness

Action Steps

- 1) Provide career awareness/education and goal setting activities to promote values and attitudes regarding future education and vocation.
- 2) Establish some form of "trade training."
- 3) Establish and support programs which promote educational and cultural awareness.
- 4) Establish an after school mentoring and tutoring program that prepares students in academic disciplines required for successful performance on the High School Graduation Exam and SAT.
- 5) In partnership with the Clay County Arts League, urge the schools to provide facilities and teen volunteers to facilitate the summer Arts Camp Experience in the areas of art, drama, dance, music, pottery, etc.
- 6) In partnership with city libraries, provide after-school reading programs.
- 7) Establish a family resource center where the foregoing classes, etc. will be provided.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases among teens in Clay County

Action Steps

- 1) Provide career awareness/education and goal setting activities to promote values and attitudes regarding future education and vocation.
- 2) Administer (by professionals) a sexual abstinence based program to all Clay County 7th, 8th, and 9th graders.
- 3) Provide and organize a process for the encouragement of pre-marriage counseling.
- 4) Establish and support groups that promote educational and cultural awareness.
- 5) Establish a family resource center where the foregoing classes and counseling, etc. will be provided.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Will development of parental skills programs together with child coping skill programs contribute to the betterment of families and children, and how families can be motivated to take advantage of same

Action Steps

- 1) Provide ongoing parenting classes (with child-care) with referrals from schools, court system, mental health, and other professions.
- 2) Provide all children from birth to 12 years access to family and childhood developmental classes, to coincide with the parenting classes being taught for targeted adults.
- 3) Seek business sponsorships to encourage employee awareness and involvement in a program for parental skill development.

Is a central family resource center essential to parent training and skill development

Action Steps

- 1) Attempt to locate an able executive director who is willing to come to work, even without a definitive location, and who will be willing and able seek grand funding for the position, and ultimately for a resource center.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

All children to live in a safe, stable, and emotionally healthy family

Action Steps

- 1) Provide ongoing parenting classes (with child-care) with referrals from schools, court systems, mental health, and other professions.
- 2) Provide all children from birth to 12 years access to family and childhood developmental classes, to coincide with the parenting classes being taught for target adults.
- 3) Increase the number of resources locally available to the Juvenile Courts to handle the many faceted problems that it encounters on an everyday basis.
- 4) Establish in county mentoring program.
- 5) Refer mentees from local schools and probation services and divorce.
- 6) Establish a family resource center where the foregoing classes and counseling, etc. will be provided.

Policy Recommendations

- Make funds available for more non-traditional Academic programs.
- Fund local Family Resource Centers and executive director positions.
- Fund child care for low income working families.
- Fund job training.
- Fund obtaining an appropriate and available facility building to house the Family Resource Center and employment of executive director and staff.
- Provide career awareness/education and goal setting activities to promote values and attitudes regarding future education and vocation.
- Encourage industrial recruitment to rural areas. Expenditure of money on recruitment of such industries as the Honda plant in Lincoln and the Hyundai plant, south of Montgomery provides jobs for people for miles around, and is tremendously beneficial for rural areas which have been devastated by the decline in the textile industry.
- Provide funding for educational and cultural programs and opportunities. An educated populace is more economically secure.
- Provide all children from birth to 12 years access to family and childhood developmental classes, to coincide with the parenting classes being taught for targeted adults.
- Provide initial funding for the creation of executive director positions and family resource centers. Without a location, which will not carry the stigma of a mental health center or a department of human resources, families are unlikely to seek the help necessary to their improvement.
- Provide funding for the startup of programs for development of parenting skills and for publication of the availability of the same. Small rural communities lack the resources for funding such programs; however, once originally funded, some can and often to become self supporting, through cooperation between the program, DHR, and the courts, etc. These startups should coincide with appropriate media publicity.